

We Claim:

1. A composition which inhibits the activity of a viral nucleic acid product and wherein said viral nucleic acid product inhibits the function of a cellular component which regulates translations, comprising ava 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier wherein ava 1 is present in an amount effective for inhibiting the activity of the viral nucleic acid product.

2. A composition which inhibits the activity of a viral nucleic acid product wherein said viral nucleic acid product inhibits the function of a cellular component which regulates translations, comprising ava 9 or ava 15 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and where ava 9 or ava 15 is present in an amount effective for inhibiting the activity of the viral nucleic acid product.

3. A method of inhibiting translation of a nucleic acid containing an IRES wherein said nucleic acid is obtained from a virus, comprising the step of administering to an organism a nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES, wherein the ability of the nucleic acid fragment to inhibit translation of the viral nucleic acid containing an IRES is detected by:

- a) contacting the nucleic acid fragment with a reporter gene construct having the following elements operatively linked: a replication origin, a promoter, a reporter gene and said IRES, under the conditions sufficient to allow translation of the reporter gene to occur;
- b) measuring the level of the translation product of the reporter gene exposed to the nucleic acid fragment; and

c) comparing the amount in (b) to the level of translation product synthesized by the reporter gene construct which was not exposed to the nucleic acid fragment, so that nucleic acid fragments which inhibit translation of nucleic acids containing said IRES are identified.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said virus is picornavirus.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein said virus is selected from the group consisting of rhinovirus, enterovirus, cardiovirus and aphthovirus.

6. The method of claim 3 wherein said virus is selected from the group consisting of hepatitis A, and hepatitis C.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein said rhinovirus is rhinovirus 14.

8. The method of claim 3 wherein said nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES is an oligonucleotide comprising a purine tract of about 4 to 12 nucleotides.

9. The method of claim 3 wherein said nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES is an oligonucleotide comprising a purine tract of about 5 to 9 nucleotides.

10. The method of claim 3 wherein said oligonucleotide further comprises a CAT nucleotide triplet.

11. A method of inhibiting translation of a nucleic acid transcript containing an IRES wherein said transcript is obtained from a hepatitis B virus comprising the step of administering to an organism a nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES under conditions sufficient to allow binding of the fragment to a portion of the IRES so that translation of the transcript is inhibited.

12. A composition comprising a nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of a rhinovirus IRES and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier wherein said nucleic acid binds to at least a portion of said IRES and is present in an amount effective for inhibiting rhinovirus replication.

13. The composition of claim 12 wherein said nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES is an oligonucleotide comprising a purine tract of 4 to 12 nucleotides.

14. The composition of claim 12 wherein said nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES is an oligonucleotide comprising a purine tract of 5 to 9 nucleotides.

15. The composition of claim 12 wherein said nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of said IRES which contains a YnXmAUG sequence.

16. A composition comprising a nucleic acid fragment wherein said nucleic acid fragment is complementary to at least a portion of nucleotides from about 518-551 of a rhinovirus 14 IRES and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier

wherein the nucleic acid fragment binds to at least a portion of said IRES and is present in an amount effective for inhibiting rhinovirus 14 replication.

17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a nucleic acid fragment complementary to at least a portion of a viral IRES which contains a YnXm AUG sequence, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein the nucleic acid fragment is present in an amount effective for inhibiting viral replication.